

Official
Newsletter
of the
Fort Vancouver
Trades Guild

THE forge & plane

VOLUME V, NUMBER 2

SPRING 2007

New Faces at the Fort Vancouver Forge

THE SHOP IS PLEASED TO welcome three new volunteers, Jac Arnal, Clay Ford, and Peter Mountford.

Jac Arnal

You may see Jac at the forge on Tuesday afternoons, when he usually works on the standard initial apprentice projects. Jac, who was born in France, comes to us from southern California. He was trained as a tool and die maker in his native town of Le Martinet, northwest of Nimes. He left home to join the military, and in the service broadened his education to include electronics, eventually becoming a “link trainer technician” specializing in designing and operating flight simulators. When he was discharged, he joined Burroughs Corporation and worked in North Africa. There he met, and married, a very adventurous lady who was a member of the Peace Corps. After retiring from Burroughs (now Unisys) in 2000, Jac and his wife moved to Vancouver. While Jac was volunteering at the Wildlife Refuge at Ridgefield, he became involved in building



Jac Arnal

S. Gawecki

the *Cathlapotle* Plankhouse. On a visit to Fort Vancouver with the Friends of the Plankhouse, he encountered Ranger Bill, became interested in the shop, and found himself a space at the forge. Jac is currently setting up shop in usual blacksmith style: trade, borrow, and scrounge. He is an excellent storyteller, entertaining visitors and fellow smiths with fascinating stories about his childhood in France (watching the coal miners go to work, a French Resistance meeting place deep in the nearby mountains, a set of miniature blacksmithing tools that he made in tool and die school) and about life in North Africa.



Clay Ford

Clay Ford

Clay and Linda Ford came to this area from Davis, California, where for seven years they had both been active participants in the Mormon Battalion, a reenactment group based in Sacramento. Clay has discovered that involvement in the Mormon Battalion complements his interpretive work at the fort because the historic period in question is roughly parallel for both. The fort was one of the first stops on Clay's to-do list after he moved to the area in 2005, following retirement. He started volunteering in December and bounces between the forge and the carpenter's shop during our Hands-on Tours for Children. He is amazed and amused by the fourth-graders who come for these special tours. Clay's wife Linda, an interpretive guide for the bakeshop, also participates in the Hands-on Tours.

Peter Mountford

Peter Mountford, a native of Zimbabwe, comes to the fort via South Africa and England. Peter, who began blacksmithing in



Peter Mountford

the 1990s, is very keen on the simple and practical nature of the craft. Prior experience both as a self-employed blacksmith and as an interpretive blacksmith make him an excellent fit for the forge. Peter became increasingly interested in working hot iron after he emigrated from South Africa to England in 1997. While he was an interpretive blacksmith at the Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, it was Peter's good fortune to work with an older local blacksmith, who generously shared his considerable knowledge of the craft and of working wrought iron. Peter plans to get his shop out of mothballs as soon as the boat carrying his tools arrives from across the pond.

Our new volunteers, with their different national origins and backgrounds, add a touch of authenticity to the forge, bringing us just a bit closer to the lively cultural mix of Hawaiians, Welsh, French Canadians, Native Americans, and others that characterized the Fort in its heyday. Please welcome them. Jac is there on Tuesday afternoons, and Clay and Peter are at the anvils on Thursdays. ♦

Photos: S. Gawecki



Photo: S. Gawecki



Clockwise from left:
Finishing the Red
River cart wheel;
Plowing competition;
Beauty contest win-
ners; Blacksmiths'
corner



Photo: S. Gawecki

Champoeg Founders Day

THE FORT VANCOUVER TRADES GUILD teamed up (no pun intended) with the Oregon Draft Horse Breeders Association Annual Plowing Competition on the first weekend in May to treat participants as well as visitors to a show of blacksmithing skills. The two-day event, hosted by the Friends of Champoeg, was held at Champoeg State Park. Generous participation by guild members gave everyone enough time off to enjoy seeing the horses and drivers plow and harrow the field. Our favorite

wheelwright, Rob Lewis, was there on Saturday, tiring a wheel; and, thanks to Ranger Bill and Dave Stearns, work was completed on one wheel of the Fort Vancouver Red River cart. Many thanks to Gary Lewis for working as liaison between Champoeg volunteer director Kim Martin and the guild and additional thanks to guild members Ike Bay, Bob Conner, Ted Anderson, Harry Newton, and David Stearns for their support. Things went so well that the Friends of Champoeg plan to hold the event again next year, on the first weekend in May. The people at Champoeg were very helpful and made this a pleasant experience. Hope to see some new faces at those anvils next year! ♦

LONGTIME former guild member the late Paul Hinds has been commemorated at Antique Powerland. The Powerland forge, previously known only as the blacksmiths' shop, is now known officially as *Robinson & Hinds Blacksmiths, Est. 1970*.

A photograph of a wooden sign for 'ROBINSON & HINDS BLACKSMITHS Est. 1970'. The sign is white with a black border and is resting on cardboard boxes. The text 'ROBINSON & HINDS' is in a small, black, serif font. Below it, 'BLACKSMITHS' is in a large, bold, black, serif font. At the bottom, 'Est. 1970' is in a smaller, italicized, black, serif font. The sign is placed on a surface of brown cardboard boxes.

S. Gaweckii



S. Gaweckı

GUILD BLACKSMITHS have been busy making nails and hardware for the soon-to-be-completed Engage House, in Kanaka Village. Over two hundred nails have been forged, along with hinges and door hardware. ♦

**VOLUNTEER
BLACK-**
SMITH Bill Forgeng
has been absent from
the forge for the past
few Tuesdays, due to
surgery.



S. Gaweckii



S. Gawrecki

GUILD MEMBERS John Prutsman and Susan Gawecki designed and had fabricated a plaque in honor of guild members we have lost. Creative Woodworking Northwest donated the wood base for the plaque, which is engraved with the last verse of Longfellow's *Village Blacksmith*. It hangs at the top of the back stairs in the Indian Trade Shop, outside Bill DeBerry's office. ♦

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A Romantic, Two-Forge Weekend

Gary Lewis



ON A RECENT ROMANTIC getaway weekend to the Olympic Peninsula, my wife, Jody, and I “happened” to stumble on some blacksmithing. I had been wanting to visit Old Cedar Forge, in Allyn, Washington, for a while, so I contacted Ina Culberson, forge business manager and current president of NWBA, ahead of time about a tour.

Ina also mentioned a power hammer workshop taking place that same weekend at Nimba Forge, in Port Townsend, also on the peninsula. Wow!! Two

forges in one weekend! (Jody is a very understanding and supportive woman, but was I pushing my luck? . . . not as it turned out.) We were able to drop in to Nimba Forge on our way to Sequim, on Friday, and visit Old Cedar Forge on the way home, on Sunday. Wonderful woman, my wife!

Nimba Forge

NIMBA FORGE, founded by Russell Jaqua in 1976, is located just outside Port Townsend, in a small industrial park. It is named for Nimba Mountain, in Liberia, which is made up of 90 percent-pure iron ore. At the 2006 ABANA conference, in Seattle, a

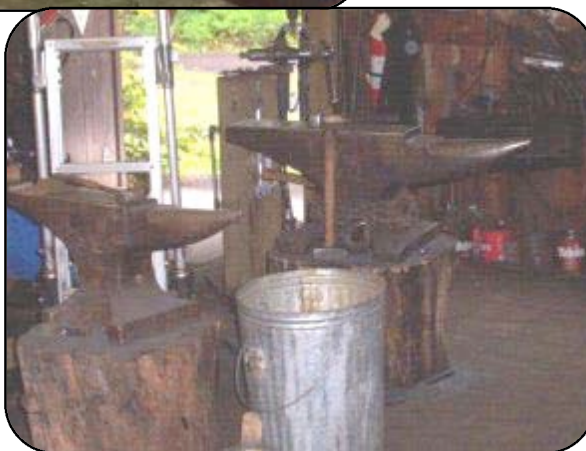
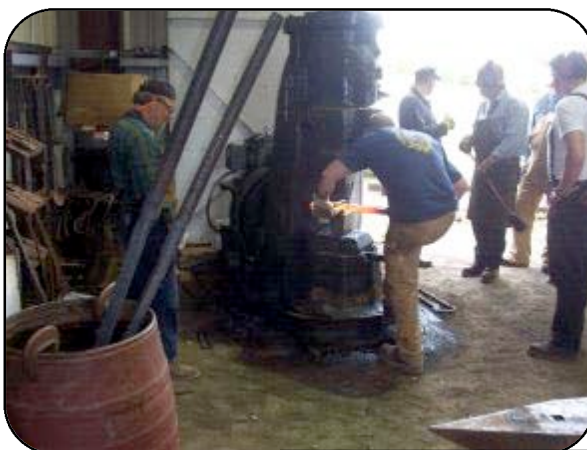
large forging titled *For Willene* was on display. The sculpture had been constructed in three days by twenty-nine smiths at an event known as the Boondoggle, held at Nimba Forge. Sadly, Russell Jaqua passed away only several months after the sculpture was completed. (See the Fall 2006 *Anvil's Ring* for an article about the Boondoggle.) Nimba Forge

also sells very distinctive anvils, many of which were in use at the Seattle conference.

Directing the Nimba Forge power hammer workshop was Ina's husband, Jerry Culberson, of Old Cedar Forge, with help from four assistant instructors. The weekend project was to start work on a blacksmith's gate that will have a huge 400-pound pair of tongs as the outside frame, with blacksmithing ham-

mers, tongs, and various other tools making up the inside body — a very ambitious project that will take some time to complete. The workshop goal was primarily to teach students about

power hammer safety, slitting, tenoning, and other fundamentals of power hammer work.



Above: Little Giant at Nimba Forge
Below: Anvils at Old Cedar Forge
(G.Lewis)

When we arrived, two people were working on pieces of the gate. The pieces were about 2x2x20 inches long, with a hole punched in the middle, and the blacksmiths were fullering on either side of the punched hole using a 100-pound Little Giant and a newer looking hammer that I didn't get information on. A 750-pound Chambersburg was not in use.

The Nimba shop has a very efficient industrial layout, with several large platen tables and traditional tools, anvils, and post vices off to the side. Everyone was intent on the class, so we didn't stay beyond watching them fullering a couple of pieces (plus a few seconds longer so my wife could wipe the drool, caused by close proximity to those tools, off my chin).



Open Forge at Nimba/G. Lewis

Old Cedar Forge

ON OUR WAY home Sunday, we stopped at Old Cedar Forge. Ina, who was minding the store, welcomed us warmly and gave us a tour of the shop and showroom. One of the things I had heard wonders about was Jerry's 650-pound Columbian anvil, and I was not disappointed. It must really move the metal! The shop is set up for teaching, with three stations of three anvils and vises to one propane forge. Jerry's big Columbian is positioned to allow him an overview of all the

students. Old Cedar Forge has recently begun giving classes again. Probably a thousand pair of tongs and various other tools too numerous to mention were in view. Of course, a coal forge was there for those who wish to learn, but it is not used in the general classes because of the extra time needed for fire management. In the back room were a 500-pound Chambersburg, a 100-pound Little Giant, and a place for the newer hammer that was in use at the Nimba Forge workshop.

I felt very comfortable at Old Cedar. The shop had a warm, welcoming feel even though no forging was in progress, and I'm looking forward to returning when fires are burning. The showroom was also pleasing, and somehow feels much bigger than it really is. It is filled with beautiful metalwork, ranging from useful hooks, hangers, and fireplace sets to some finely crafted sculptures. All pieces are all hand forged and coated with a clear finish.

Old Cedar Forge has been in operation for over twenty-five years. Jerry Culberson, a blacksmith for fifty-seven years, is well known. Ina is currently president of NWBA and, in addition to being Old Cedar's business manager, is very active in local community affairs. Both Nimba and Old Cedar forges have web sites where you can get better directions and more information.

<http://nimbaforge.com>

<http://oldcedarforge.com/index.cfm>

All in all, it was a great "romantic" weekend getaway. And, since my wife did make me hike eleven miles round-trip on the Dungeness Spit to see the lighthouse on Saturday, it wasn't even a hundred percent-blacksmithing! ♦

Hardies: Use, Care, and Etiquette

David Stearns

AFTER THE HAMMER and the anvil, the most commonly used tool at the forge is probably the hardy. I was a little chagrined when we looked around in preparation for a workshop last fall and discovered that we were using a motley collection of castoff and nearly worn out hardies. With a little help from Ike and Dennis and a handy sledge, we have rectified that situation. Each workstation is now fitted with a reconditioned hardy, except for the northeast station, which has the new one that we made. As we were pounding out the new one, we did some collaborative thinking about hardies, and there was a strong consensus from the end of the sledge that we create some guidelines for their use and care.

Using the Hardy

HARDIES used for hot work are not heat-treated at all, beyond normalizing. If they are simple carbon steel, as is appropriate in an historic shop like ours, they will not cut black metal. Continuing to try to cut after a piece is dull red damages the edge of the hardy. If we cut all the way through, instead of cutting almost through and breaking off the piece, the hammer face will hit the hardy and one, or both, will be damaged. Once a piece is cut almost through, to break it off, you can strike just beyond the hardy edge, do the same thing at the anvil edge, or twist the piece free with tongs.

One thing I have noticed, having done it for years myself until it was pointed out to me, is that many novices get in the habit of

positioning the hardy with the cutting edge at a right angle to the long side of the anvil.

(I think that nearly all technique books show it like that.) It may be customary, but it is also a very awkward way to work. Next time, try turning the hardy so the cutting edge runs the long way of the anvil. You will be amazed at how much more natural it is to use the hardy that way, at least I was.

Maintaining the Hardy

EVEN KEEPING these cautions in mind, the sad truth is that we all eventually dull or damage the edge of the hardy. In a shop with many workers using the same stations, it is especially inappropriate to leave damaged tools without fixing them. In order to sharpen a hardy, place it in the vise or in its own hole and use a file on both sides to reshape a knife edge. I find if I hold the file handle with my dominant hand and put the heel of my off hand on the end at the proper angle, the file will just clear the vise jaws or anvil edge. It is very important not to put an obtuse final angle on the

edge: that makes cutting much more like fullering, since the edge has to push aside more material. If you haven't tried an acute angle on hot tools I encourage you to do so. You will be surprised by how much easier and faster the tool will cut. At some point, enough metal will be removed to make it necessary to reforge the edge. That takes some experience to do properly without ruining the tool, so if you aren't sure, get some help. ♦



I. Bay

FORT CALENDAR

First Fridays at the Fort

July 6 • August 3 • September 7
Sponsors: NPS and Vancouver National
Historic Reserve
Meet at the bandstand • 6:30 PM • Free

Vancouver Heritage Ambassadors Tours of Officers Row

Every Friday through August 31
6:30 PM • O. O. Howard House
Fees: Adults \$10, Children \$5
Information: 360-992-1800

Archeological Field School

June 19 – August 4
Information: 360-816-6230

Flag Day

Thursday, June 14
2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
Information: 360-816-6230

Brigade Encampment

Saturday, June 16 • Sunday June 17
10:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Historic Weapons Program

June 23 – September 2
Saturdays/Parade Ground • Sundays/Fort
1:30 PM
Fort entrance fee required

Kids Digs

Saturday, June 30
11:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Limit: 20 participants • First come, first served
Fort entrance fee required

Fourth of July

Wednesday, July 4
8:00 AM – 11:00 PM
Living History Events • FIREWORKS

Soldiers Bivouac

Saturday, July 21 • Sunday July 22
9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Parade Grounds • Free

Vintage Baseball

July 21 • August 18
6:00 PM • Parade Grounds • Free

Founders Day

Saturday, August 25
Celebrate Founding of National Park Service
NO FEES TODAY!



Toy Trade Axe

THIS WROUGHT IRON axe (c.1829 – 1842) is made in the typical Hudson's Bay Company axe style, but is miniature in size. It is an exact duplicate of the larger single-piece, round-headed axes made in the Blacksmith Shop at Fort Vancouver. It was found during archaeological excavations and is associated with a burnt refuse pit feature outside the southeast corner of the fort site. A full-size trade axe has been included in the image for comparison. ♦

Background Reading for Volunteers

THE FOLLOWING are available in the Fort Library, along with numerous other suggested readings about the fort and about interpreting for park visitors. (For a complete list, check the Reading List for New Volunteers www.nps.gov/archive/fova/readinglist.htm.)

The Library is located in the Archeology Department. Please call beforehand to visit it.

Fort Vancouver, Official National Park Handbook 113.
(Washington D.C.: Department of the Interior). FOVA 979.786 Fort

The official handbook for Fort Vancouver National Historic Site contains a good overview of the Fort Vancouver story from exploration of the Pacific Northwest to the arrival of the United States Army written by David Lavender.

A Social History of Fort Vancouver, 1829-1849, by Thomas B. Roulstone. University of Utah, Master's Thesis, 1975. 158 pages. FOVA 979.786 Roul
This master's thesis remains the best source on society at the fort. It takes a look at several aspects of the fort's history — social structure, law and authority, marriage and morals, family life, social services (religion, education, and medicine), and work and play.

Notes from the Fort

WELL, THE SCHOOL YEAR is coming to a close, and soon we will not have all those kids running around to be educated and entertained. This has been a tremendous year for school programs, and I want to thank every one of you who have contributed time and energy to make the cultural demonstration areas such a vital part of the fort's story. I can tell you that I hear from many adults who say they can remember coming here as kids, and the blacksmith shop, the kitchen, and the bakehouse are what they remember. Thanks again for your efforts.

With summer, the special events season begins, and, again, I look forward to seeing individuals step up and help out at the various venues, to show the visitors just what a special place this is. Watch your email for information about upcoming events, and be sure to let me know in advance if you plan to work a particular event. We want to have a fairly complete roster before each one, and please remember to check in at the front gate when you arrive to help at an event.

Thanks to all the old hands and the many new hands for all your dedicated work. See you at the fort. ♦ — Bill

Bill DeBerry, Historic Programs Coordinator

Notes from the President

I WILL BE LEAVING the office of President of the Fort Vancouver Trades Guild at the annual meeting, since I have maxed out the term limits. I want to thank everyone for their help and support. We have done many good things together, and we will do many more. Areas in need of improvement are not lacking, starting with the shop's selection of tongs and their condition.

I know that you will all give the new president, whoever that may be, the same help and support that you gave me! ♦ — Ike

Ike Bay, Guild President

EVENTS FOR BLACKSMITHS

Sherwood History Camp

Parrett Mountain, Oregon
Sunday, June 24 – Monday, June 25

Gary Lewis (502-256-0338)
or contact the Sherwood Historical Society:
(503-925-1947)

Blacksmith Day

Champoeg State Park • St. Paul, Oregon
July 14 • 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

(503-678-1649)

Kim@champoeg.org

Antique Powerland 2007 Great Oregon Steam-Up

Brooks, Oregon

July 28 – 29 • August 4– 5

www.antiquepowerland.com

Caniron VI

Victoria, British Columbia, Canada
June 29 – 30 • July 1 – 2

www.caniron.ca

Neil Gustafson: swedefiddle@shaw.ca

Dave Winestock: davewinestock@yahoo.com

Advanced Decorative Iron in the 18th Century English Style

Peter Ross

Meridian Forge • Eatonville, Washington
August 17 – 19

Ike Bay (503-645-2790)

dasbayhaus@worldnet.att.net

Farmstead Day

Champoeg State Park • St. Paul, Oregon
September 1 • 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

(503-678-1649)

Kim@champoeg.org

Fort Vancouver Trades Guild Annual Meeting & Election of Officers

Sunday, June 10

Board Meeting

9:00 AM

General Membership Meeting

10:00 AM

CHECK THESE OUT

<http://jaha.org/BlacksmithShop/history.html>

A really great site for the Cambria Iron Company (Bethlehem Steel), now a National Historic Landmark, in Johnstown, PA. Founded in 1852 and closed down by Bethlehem in 1992, the shop covers over 140 years of blacksmithing

<http://www.bcmuseumofmining.org>

History of the mill at Britannia Copper Mine, built in 1923 at Britannia Beach, B.C. The history of the mill, supported by numerous images, includes a virtual 3-D walkthrough of the concentrator, built in 1923.

Write me a letter, send it by (e)mail . . .

When your email address changes, please remember to notify newsletter editor Susan Gawecki (information below). Members who receive the *F&P* electronically save the guild money and see the newsletter sooner.

THANK YOU!! 2006 Guild Officers and Board Members

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THE
forge
&
plane

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